



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

BOOKER T. WASHINGTON
NATIONAL MONUMENT

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BOOKER T. WASHINGTON NM News Release

Release date: **Immediate**

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Date: **March 26, 2015**

Release code: **15-03**

Healthy Parks, Healthy People Second Season Begins

Hardy, VA - "Walk and Talk with Carilion," is back for the second season!! A Kick Off event on Saturday, April 11 from 10:00 AM to 12:00 noon at the monument will feature popular former TV personality and Carilion Clinic Senior Communications Consultant, Karen McNew. An award winning news anchor for WSLN-10 for over 16 years, Ms. McNew has covered health care and health issues since 2000. After a short program, participants will hike the beautiful Jack O' Lantern Branch Trail led by Ms. McNew and Gail Nordhaus, RN, Carilion Clinic Community Outreach Coordinator.

The Walk and Talk program is a part of the Healthy Parks, Healthy People initiative of the National Park Service in partnership with the Carilion Clinic. Healthy Parks, Healthy People is a new initiative to get more people into the parks to enjoy nature and reap the health benefits of communing with nature and exercising. The theme is "Take a Hike and Call Me in the Morning." Get the most up-to-date health information on a variety of topics and take advantage of the opportunity to ask the experts while walking around the beautiful Jack O' Lantern Branch Trail. Add it to your list of New Year's Resolutions!

These popular walks on the second Saturday of the month from April to November are led by a variety of Carilion Clinic health care professionals. In addition to the Carilion walk, other HPHP programs such as nature walks and other health programs will also be offered this year. Park Ranger, Janet Blanchard, will lead a "Walk with A Ranger," an easy walk around the ¼ mile trail through the Heritage and farm areas on Wednesdays at 4:00 PM. Among other plans a Tree Identification Walk, a Wildflower Walk and a Garden Walk will be offered as part of an expanded HPHP Initiative. As last year, **health programs for the children** participating in the popular July Jr. Ranger programs will be offered as well. Anyone is invited to join the walks and the Booker T. Washington Walking Club. Regular users of the trail are encouraged to register for the HPHP Walking Club and receive emails and a HPHP T- shirt, whether participating in the Walk and Talks or not. Those participating in at least two walks will be given a colorful HPHP T-shirt and have a chance to earn a decorative patch for every 10.5 miles walked (7 times on the JOLB Trail). Anyone participating in all, but one Carilion Walk and Talk will be awarded FREE Movie tickets donated by Carilion Clinic.

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA

The National Park Service cares for special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

Research has shown many benefits of walking such as a decrease in bad cholesterol (LHL) and increase in the good cholesterol (HDL) as well as lowering of triglycerides, stabilization of blood sugar levels and a lifting of depression. Communing with nature and walking in woodland areas has also been shown to elevate serotonin levels and endorphins, brain chemicals which give a feeling of well-being. Booker T. Washington talked about his appreciation of nature gained as a child, when he roamed the wooded areas and fished in the Jack O' Lantern Branch of Gills Creek. As an adult, he took frequent fishing trips and said that nature refreshed him. Winding along a branch of Gill's Creek, the JOLB Trail is a beautiful trail that is rated easy, has some uphill sections and is walked at an easy pace.

This is the 2nd year the program has been supported by a grant from the National Park Foundation Active Trails program. The NPF paid for the T-Shirts, the patches and last year's luncheon. This year these funds will pay for a new interpretive nature brochure, a pedestrian counter to more accurately count walkers using the trail and supplies for improving the trail.

Anyone who wants more information or who is interested in volunteering to help develop other programs is invited to call Park Ranger, Janet Blanchard at (540) 721-2094.

Booker T. Washington National Monument is one of 407 units of the National Park Service, the agency entrusted with the care of our nation's natural and cultural treasures. The park is located 16 miles northeast of Rocky Mount, VA via VA 122; 25 miles southeast of Roanoke, VA via U.S. 220 and VA 122; and 45 miles southwest of Lynchburg, VA via U.S. 460 and VA 122. The park is open seven days a week from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Admission, parking, and all programs are free. Visit us on the web at: www.nps.gov/bowa and find us on Facebook at: www.facebook.com/BookerTWashingtonNPS.

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